
APPENDIX D

Wood County Wildlife Area Site Descriptions

Site descriptions for the Primary Sites that occur within the Wood County Wildlife Area. See the main text for more details on site selection, methods, and definitions.

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WC01. BALL ROAD FLOWAGES

Location

Subsection: Central Wisconsin Sand Plain (222Ra)
USGS 7.5' Quadrangle: City Point
Town-Range-Section: T21N-R1E, sections 13
T21N-R2E, sections 3-10 and 15-18
T22N-R2E, sections 32 and 33
Approximate Size: 3360

Description of Site

The site is part of a 13,000-acre peatland encompassing much of the heavily ditched Ball Road Flowages. The least altered area is a 831-acre central sedge poor fen located to the north of the most ditched area and to the east of an extensive cranberry cultivation area. The poor fen is dominated by sphagnum mosses, various sedges, hardhack, bog birch, woolgrass, and cottongrass. There is some ditching even in this area (running west-east), with two track roads on the dike berms. There is a Muskeg or Tamarack Swamp inclusionary community in the west-central part of the site; surrounding this is a narrow fringe of Open Bog with pitcher plants and other typical species. To the south, the fen grades into more of a Northern Sedge Meadow community with grasses, sedges, rushes, and forbs dominant.

Significance of Site

Extensive ditching has compromised site hydrology and some of the natural values. However, owing to its large size and context, as well as its content, values for many wildlife species remain very high, particularly for certain grassland birds, and species dependent on conifer swamps. A number of the animals found here are rare or uncommon, and are quite specialized in their habitat needs. Among these are the Sharp-tailed Grouse, Northern Harrier, American Bittern, Golden-winged Warbler, Connecticut Warbler, and LeConte's Sparrow. Several rare plants have been documented in the site's wetlands.

Management Considerations

Expanding the area of open wetland is a key management consideration, as is maintenance of the larger, better-developed conifer swamps. Periodic prescribed burning and, perhaps, additional measures such as mechanical brush control are needed in areas being encroached upon by aspen and willow. Restoration of barrens vegetation or sand prairie should be considered for appropriate upland sites. Clarification of the long-term impacts of the extensive hydrologic manipulations that have occurred here is also needed.

WC01 - Ball Road Flowages Element Occurrences

Scientific Name	Common Name	Date	State Rank	Global Rank	WI Status
Animals					
<i>Cygnus buccinator</i>	trumpeter swan	1999	S1B,SZN	G4	END
<i>Tympanuchus phasianellus</i>	sharp-tailed grouse	1999	S2B,S2N	G4	SC/M
Plants					
<i>Bartonia virginica</i>	yellow screwstem	1998	S3	G5	SC
<i>Didiplis diandra</i>	water-purslane	1997	S2	G5	SC
<i>Myriophyllum farwellii</i>	Farwell's water-milfoil	1997	S3	G5	SC

Scientific Name	Common Name	Date	State Rank	Global Rank	WI Status
<i>Potamogeton diversifolius</i>	water-thread pondweed	1997	S2	G5	SC
<i>Utricularia geminiscapa</i>	hidden-fruited bladderwort	1998	S3	G4G5	SC
Communities					
central poor fen	central poor fen	1997	S3		NA

WC02. SOUTH BLUFF TAMARACKS

Location

Subsection:	Central Wisconsin Sand Plain (222Ra)
USGS 7.5' Quadrangle:	Quail Point Flowage
Town-Range-Section:	T21N-R2E, parts of Sections 15, 22 and 23
Approximate Size:	310

Description of Site

This site features a remote, forested peatland in the bed of extinct Glacial Lake Wisconsin, dominated by relatively large tamarack up to approximately 8" d.b.h. Near its margins, it grades into tamarack bog, Muskeg, and Alder Thicket. The organic soils are peats of the Dawson and Greenwood series, with the water table quite near the surface. A thick layer of sphagnum mosses dominates the groundlayer of this swamp. Characteristic vascular plants include huckleberry, swamp dewberry, early blueberry, cinnamon fern, and sedges. In more open areas the frequent species are Canada bluejoint grass, tussock sedge, large-fruited cranberry, tag alder, balsam willow, and wool-grass.

The site is near the southern margin of a large, mostly open boggy meadow (Central Poor Fen) that has been extensively ditched and diked with attendant alterations in hydrology (see notes on "Ball Road Flowage"). An old corduroy logging road leads into the site.

To the south is a xeric upland forest on sands, managed primarily for commercial forest products and game animals. Forest dominants include young trembling aspen, white pine, red maple, Hill's and bur oaks. Two-track logging roads are common.

Significance of Site

This is one of the more mature, relatively undisturbed examples of this community type within the project area. The local hydrology is intact, though most of the non-forested peatlands in the vicinity have been modified by ditching, diking, and road construction.

Management Considerations

This tamarack swamp merits consideration for special management designation. There are few protected stands of this forest community in the central sands. Compare with other similar surveyed stands in the landscape.

WC02 - South Bluff Tamaracks Element Occurrences

Scientific Name	Common Name	Date	State Rank	Global Rank	WI Status
Plants					
<i>Thelypteris simulata</i>	bog fern	1997	S3	G4G5	SC
Communities					
northern dry-mesic forest	northern dry-mesic forest	1980	S3	G4	NA
northern sedge meadow	northern sedge meadow	1980	S3	G4	NA
northern wet forest	northern wet forest	1980	S4	G4	NA
tamarack (poor) swamp	tamarack (poor) swamp	1997	S3	G4	NA

WC03. SOUTH BLUFF

Location

Subsection:	Central Wisconsin Sand Plain (222Ra)
USGS 7.5' Quadrangle:	Quail Point Flowage
Town-Range-Section:	T21N-R2E, parts of Sections 23-26, 30, and 36
Approximate Size:	484

Description of Site

South Bluff is a steep, barren, northwest to southeast trending Cambrian sandstone outcrop approximately one mile long and 170 feet high, located in vast flat sandy uplands and peatlands in the bed of extinct Glacial Lake Wisconsin. The primary soil associated with the bluff is Plainbo Sand. The most extensive plant community is a mixed forest of oaks and pines. Canopy trees include Hill's/black oak, bur oak, red maple, paper birch, red pine, and white pine. The site has been periodically logged and burned, but is currently recovering well. The understory dominants are huckleberry and bracken fern. The north side of the bluff has a somewhat moister second-growth forest that supports tall shrubs such as witch hazel and maple-leaved viburnum. Typical herbs are wild sarsaparilla, big-leaved aster, and starflower.

There is an unused fire tower atop the western end of the ridge that can be accessed via a two-track road. The surrounding landscape is utilized for recreation, wildlife habitat, and commercial forest products.

Significance of Site

The site contains a relatively intact stand of a regionally important forest community. The bluff itself constitutes an interesting geological feature.

Management Considerations

No management recommendations or suggestions are offered at this time, though the forest might be considered for extended rotation or the development of old-growth characteristics. Compare with other stands of this community type in the project area.

WC03 - South Bluff Element Occurrences

Scientific Name	Common Name	Date	State Rank	Global Rank	WI Status
Plants					
<i>Thelypteris simulata</i>	bog fern	1997	S3	G4G5	SC
Communities					
northern dry-mesic forest	northern dry-mesic forest	1980	S3	G4	NA
northern sedge meadow	northern sedge meadow	1980	S3	G4	NA
northern wet forest	northern wet forest	1980	S4	G4	NA
southern dry-mesic forest	southern dry-mesic forest	1997	S3	G4	NA

WC04. COUNTY TRUNK HIGHWAY X SAND PRAIRIE

Location

Subsection:	Central Wisconsin Sand Plain (222Ra)
USGS 7.5' Quadrangle:	City Point, Quail Point Flowage
Town-Range-Section:	T21N-R3E, sections 15
Approximate Size:	6

Description of Site

This site contains dry sand prairie/barrens vegetation within a powerline right-of-way and along roadsides. Common plants include big and little bluestem, Indian grass, Canada bluegrass, Penn sedge, lupine, and many other prairie species, as well as barrens species such as sweet fern, poverty oatgrass, and early blueberry. The rare dwarf milkweed and Karner blue butterfly are present. The soils are Plainfield Sands. The site occurs in a matrix of second-growth Hill's oak – red pine – red maple forest. To the west is Corner Marsh, to the east a low quality sedge meadow/poor fen, and farther east, the Yellow River Bottoms (Babcock site). Private property abuts the southern and eastern margins of the site. In general, the surrounding area is managed for recreation, wildlife, and timber production.

Significance of Site

Conservation limitations include small site size and the linear configuration nature of the richer prairie patches. Although vulnerable to inadvertent disturbance or destruction, the prairie areas support several rare species and constitute one of the better examples of this community type in the project area. Sand prairies have been greatly diminished in the Central Sands landscape and everywhere else within their Wisconsin range.

Management Considerations

Periodic controlled burns and mechanical brushing are the preferable options for controlling encroaching woody vegetation. The use of herbicides in the right-of-way to control unwanted woody species could be damaging to both the rare plants and, indirectly, to the rare invertebrates that occur here. The potential for expansion of the prairie vegetation beyond the right-of-way should be explored carefully. In the meantime, it is important to work with the managers responsible for right-of-way maintenance to avoid unnecessarily damaging the site.

WC04 - County Trunk Highway X Sand Prairie Element Occurrences

Scientific Name	Common Name	Date	State Rank	Global Rank	WI Status
Plants					
<i>Asclepias ovalifolia</i>	dwarf milkweed	1997	S3	G5?	THR
Communities					
sand prairie	sand prairie	1997	S2		NA

WC05. WOOD COUNTY WILDLIFE AREA TAMARACKS

Location

Subsection: Central Wisconsin Sand Plain (222Ra)
 County: Wood
 USGS 7.5' Quadrangle: City Point
 Town-Range-Section: T21N-R2E, part of Section 31
 Size: 315

Description of Site

This site contains a tamarack-black spruce swamp embedded in a large, hydrologically modified peatland in the bed of extinct Glacial Lake Wisconsin, in the southwestern corner of Wood County. The substrate is thick sphagnum moss and sedge peat over lacustrine sand. The trees in this swamp are small, densely stocked, and range up to 5" d.b.h. Canopy associates include white pine, red maple, and paper birch. The groundlayer is characterized by large sphagnum moss hummocks, with plentiful huckleberry, swamp dewberry, cinnamon fern, and various sedges. The site is located within a huge modified peatland encompassing over 50 square miles, with cranberry cultivation to the north, west, and east. Ditches and dikes have manipulated water levels in much of the surrounding wetland. Besides cranberry production, the adjacent lands and waters are managed for wildlife, timber production, and recreation. A north-south running town road occurs along the western boundary of the site.

Significance of Site

The site contains an intact bog forest of tamarack and black spruce bog forest. Several rare plants have been documented here.

Management Considerations

Maintain site hydrology to the degree possible with respect to this forest. The stand merits consideration for special management recognition and designation owing to its maturity, generally unmanipulated condition, and lack of similar opportunities elsewhere. More detailed animal work is warranted, especially for birds and invertebrates. Forested "islands" to the north and east of the mapped conifer swamp should also be surveyed in the future.

WC05 – Wood County Wildlife Area Tamaracks Element Occurrences

Scientific Name	Common Name	Date	State Rank	Global Rank	WI Status
Plants					
<i>Bartonia virginica</i>	yellow screwstem	1998	S3	G5	SC
<i>Carex cumulata</i>	clustered sedge	1997	S2	G4?	SC
<i>Polygala cruciata</i>	crossleaf milkwort	1997	S3	G5	SC
<i>Potamogeton diversifolius</i>	water-thread pondweed	1997	S2	G5	SC
<i>Thelypteris simulata</i>	bog fern	1997	S3	G4G5	SC
Communities					
Northern Wet Forest	Northern Wet Forest	1997	S4	G4	NA

